GOSSIP FROM STATE HOUSE

Secretary Ed Royse of the state banking board is dead at Lincoln.

The state senate has unanimously passed the bill calling for a constitutional convention.

A bill amending the workmen's compensation law, has been reported out and placed on general file.

Members of the state legislature are already discussing the advisability of an early adjournment, preferably about April first.

Henry's bill to enlarge the scope of the warehouse law and to permit recovery on warehouseman's bond has been passed by the senate.

The house finance committee reporting out the university special appropriation bill has reduced the amount available for professor's salaries by $200,000.

A new draft of the anti-cigaret law would make it possible for anyone over 21 to indulge in his habit, but the sale to minors is drastically forbidden.

According to an opinion by Attorney General Reed, private or parochial schools cannot collect tuition nor receive monies appropiated for high school work.

Miss June Lundmark of Scottsbluff has taken up her duties as chief clerk in the office of Land Commissioner Grant L. Shumway. Miss Lundmark succeeds Carl Schmidt.

According to replies sent by the state game warden to inquiries regarding the open season, it is unlawful to kill waterfowl at any time except from September 16 to December 31.

State Treasurer Hall has issued an order to county treasurers requesting them to make monthly settlements of their accounts, the order being directed by virtue of a decision of the supreme court.

Omaha entertained the legislators and their wives last week. An auto tour, a visit to South Omaha, a luncheon, the auto show, and a dinner at the Commercial club were the features of the entertainment.

Richmond's capitol bill, providing for a new east wing, has been reported out. It carries a recommendation for the creation of a capitol commission comprising the governor and four citizens, which will adopt plans for the structure.

The house elections committee has reported out for favorable action the Conley bill providing for nominations of state officers below governor by state conventions of the various parties. The measure also provides for selection of state convention delegates by voters of each county.

The amount of the funds available for Nebraska under the Smith-Hughes bill for vocational training, recently signed by the president, is specified in a letter to State Superintendent Clemmons from the department of the interior. They are: In 1918, $20,450; in 1919, $27,980; in 1920, $36,900.

By a vote that lacked three of being unanimous the lower house Wednesday morning gave its final approval to the prohibition bill as drawn up by the special dry committee from both houses and as amended in order to meet the provisions of the federal bone dry act.

Dr. L. T. Sidwell, formerly of Omaha and a graduate of the University of Nebraska, has been appointed second physician at the Ingleside hospital for the insane, by the state board of control. He succeeds the late Dr. Oaks, second physician for six years, who died of pneumonia a month ago.

Without one word of protest the bill appropriating the proceeds of the three-fourths mill tax levy for university campus extension and new buildings on the enlarged campus and at the state farm, was ordered to its third reading by the house in committee of the whole. The vote was practically unanimous.

Jens Nielsen secured favorable action upon his bill allowing a debtor to begin suit against his creditors in county court, with the object of allowing him a period of time to pay up without going into bankruptcy or being harrassed by garnishment proceedings.

E. O. Mayfield of Omaha has taken his place as chairman of the state board of control and his first official act was to sign the good time allowances of four convicts now held at the state prison.

By a vote of five to two the standing committee amended S. F. 78, by Sandall, so as to confer municipal suffrage upon women. As amended the bill will be reported for the general file without recommendation of any nature.

Representative Taylor won his long fight for the passage of a bill levying a one mill tax on all property in the state, the proceeds to be divided among certain specified rural schools. The house passed the bill by a vote of 59 to 33, with eight absent.

Fight Dry Weather With Holes in the Ground

By Robert H. Moulton

Farmers in semi-arid regions of west and Southwest make inexpensive silos by digging pits and lining them with cement : : Method may be used profitably in any part of country

METHOD OF FILLING SILO

USING REAMER FOR TRUING SIDES OF SILO

IN THE pit silo the farmers of the semi-arid regions of the Southwest have found a valuable aid in their efforts to wrest a living from the soil. In the winter of 1913-14, following the unprecedented drought of 1913, it proved its value to such an extent that hundreds of them have been constructed by the farmers of western Kansas, Oklahoma, eastern Colorado, northern Texas, and New Mexico. In one Colorado county alone—El Paso—the existence of a few pit silos last fall saved $50,000 worth of live stock which would have perished in the severe winter following the dry summer. There were more than 200 pit silos in this county the past summer.

BUILDING UP SECTION OF SILO CURB

The silo is getting to be an old story on the prosperous farms of the middle West. The value of the great tank to preserve the feed values of forage crops and utilize them through the winter and spring when the pastures are resting, has been tested so often that nearly every successful farmer has constructed one or more of them.

The pit silo is only about three years old, and has been in extensive use for only two years. It is not a new thing, but it is new in the Southwest, where it is more valuable than in any other farming region in the United States. A few silos have been in use in Iowa, in Illinois, and even in Mississippi, for a number of years, but their use in these regions has not spread.

A silo is a water-tight structure into which corn and other fodder are packed while green so tightly that no space is left for air, and with enough moisture to insure fermentation. The material is generally cut into strips not more than an inch or two in length. In the winter, after the fermentation and curing process have been completed, the silo is opened and the "mash" is fed to live stock. It is as palatable and nourishing as green fodder, and exhaustive and long-continued experiments have proved that beef cattle, milch cows, hogs, horses, mules, and sheep thrive on it. The process preserves about 90 per cent of the food values of the green fodder. If the fodder is left in stacks or shocks it loses fully one-half of the food value through the drying-out process.

In the Southwest last winter and spring the owners of pit silos learned that the immature and hot-wind dried-out fodder crops, which would have been practically worthless as dry food, made a very good food when converted into ensilage in the pit silos. One illustration will prove its value in this regard.

J. C. Michael is a farmer in the Lincoln district of El Paso county, in eastern Colorado. In August, 1913, when it was apparent that the drought and hot winds had already made it impossible to secure a crop, Michael, assisted by two men working at odd times, built a 35-ton pit silo. The cash outlay was only $4.45. Into this hole in the ground Michael packed the corn from ten acres, the best of which would not yield more than ten bushels per acre. The corn was immature, and there was no chance for it to improve. If harvested and stacked for use as fodder in dry form it would have been worth only a few dollars per acre.

From late fall until spring Mr. Michael fed the ensilage to 10 milch cows and 12 heifers, 20 pounds a day per head for the cows and five pounds for the heifers. No grain was fed, but the cattle were given a little millet and oat straw for roughage. The entire herd kept in good condition, and the ten cows provided Mr. Michael with ten dollars' worth of cream every week.

The pit silos in the Southwest are generally nothing more than holes in the ground lined with cement of varying thickness. Some of them are constructed with a heavy concrete collar to prevent the ground caving in and to keep out the moisture.

Some of them have concrete extension above the surface of the ground. There are all sorts and sizes and all shapes and kinds of construction, for the pit silo is still such a new farm device that it has not been standardized. The cost ranges from $4.45 cash outlay of Mr. Michael, to $150 for the larger ones, with an inch cement lining and heavy concrete collars extending deep into the ground and above-ground extensions. The average cost of the hundreds that have been built ranges between $15 and $20.

A number of interesting methods have been brought into use to make the most of this new form of silo. Two brothers, Ray and Fay Harner, who live near Colby, in western Kansas, have discovered a method by which they can dig a 30-foot hole for a pit silo in about two days. They contract to dig pit silos 10 feet in diameter and 30 feet deep for about $35, and their method is practical throughout western Kansas and eastern Colorado, since there is very little rock above a depth of 40 to 30 feet.

The Harner brothers use the blower of a threshing machine with which to remove the dirt from the pit, blowing it through the air and so scattering it about that there is no unsightly pile of earth left. A five-horse-power engine furnishes the motive power. The blower and funnel are lowered into the hole, and the men throw the dirt into the receiver. In sandy, loose soil they have sunk a 20-foot hole in eight hours, a task which would require two laborers, working in the usual way, from two to three days to accomplish. The Harners dug one pit 30 feet deep and 12 feet across in 18 hours, the dirt being carried 12 feet above the ground through an opening made in the roof of the barn and blown to the winds.

One man in Oklahoma's Panhandle last year, after he had built or dug a pit silo at a total cost of $10, proved that Russian thistles can be converted into fair stock feed. This man was Albert Stone, who lives near Guymon. When his 15 by 17 silo was finished, with a $2 shed over it, he found he was short of feed, and filled it with thistles, broomcorn, kafir and milo. The thistles were cut too late to make good feed, but in the fermenting process the thorns were softened and the cattle ate them readily. There was not enough from his 30 acres to fill the small silo, but Mr. Stone found that the results were sufficient to repay him. All winter he fed 7 milch cows, 12 horses, 6 calves, and several hogs, feeding them nothing but the silage. It lasted for three months. As dry feed it would have been gone in three weeks. That pit silo was the only source of revenue on the farm for the year, and the milk kept the family in groceries and other necessities.

Experiments covering a period of three years, made at the Kansas Agricultural college, have proved that silage from corn, from kafir and from sorghum have equal feeding value, ton for ton, for both beef cattle and dairy cows, when each variety is placed in the silo at the proper time. This proper time for corn is when the kernels are beginning to dent, for kafir and sorghum when the seeds have grown so hard they cannot be crushed between thumb and forefinger, and while the stalks and leaves are still green. These tests have proved that the practice in the past has been to cut kafir and sorghum too green to get the full feed value in the silage.

These tests will have a very important bearing upon farming in the semiarid districts. The best silage crop will be corn where the rainfall is ample, kafir where the rainfall is moderate, and sorghum where it is light. Sorghum is practically a cure crop, where it is well cultivated, in the driest years in western Kansas and Oklahoma, the Panhandle of Texas, and in eastern New Mexico and in Colorado.

Every farmer in the Southwest, it is said, needs a silo as badly as he needs anything; it is further said that not two men in ten are able to build an above-ground silo because of the expense. The pit silo, costing only one-tenth as much, and capable of being built by the farmer himself, is expected to solve this problem until farmers are able to purchase the more expensive and better above-ground silos of woods, tile, concrete or metal.

SOME STRANGE FARMS

People Surely Have Unusual Means of Money Making in United States.

Turkey has its mosques; Russia has its Cossacks; Germany has its U-boats, and Mexico has its fleas; but the United States has the queerest farms in the world.

At Pasadena, Cal., Edwin Cawston operates what is perhaps the largest ostrich farm in the world. Of course, it isn't everyone who would care to keep ostriches. But Mr. Cawston doesn't mind it a bit, for he controls a great part of the ostrich-plume supply of the world. If you have ever purchased an ostrich plume of the first grade you may have a faint inkling as to how much money can be made from an ostrich farm, if you know how. Once Pennsylvanians got the fever and started an ostrich farm up near Sunbury, but the poor, unoffending birds refused to become acclimated; said they were not snowbirds, or something to that effect. Be that as it may, Cawston's ostrich farm remains today the greatest in the world.

At Victoria, in Mexico, there is a parrot ranch. And some distance beyond Los Angeles, Cal., there is an immense pigeon farm. There one will find nearly 15,000 pigeons. And almost everybody knows that there is money in pigeons; indeed, where is the schoolboy who hasn't kept a few at one time or another? Also, in Colorado there is a bear farm. And somewhere up in Canada is a man who is making money by rearing wolves; the skins bring handsome prices.

At Hot Springs, Ark., H. J. Campbell has an alligator farm, which is but another of the American queerest farms in the world. But down in Florida, where the alligator grows, the farmers used to shoot the whole blooming family. It is said that between 1890 and 1900 more than 3,000,000 saurians were killed. Of course, perhaps there was ample reason for this wholesale butchery. The alligators seemed to take great delight in depleting the farmers' herds of cattle. Even the docile cow was not immune. Naturally, making away with the alligators in wholesale lots caused a shortage in alligator skin, and the leather manufacturers felt the pinch. Alligator farms were the result.

And Mr. Campbell goes Dame Nature one better—he hatches 'em out in incubators. After they get beyond the stage where they look like woolly worms with iron-clad backs, the alligators are allowed to shoot the chutes, play tag and otherwise make the most of life. But eventually—eventually—the sword of not Damocles but Campbell falls. Later, the pride of the family receives as a graduation gift a lovely alligatorskin grip or suitcase, and he and the baggage-smashers, all unmindful of the shattered romance and the pitiful tragedy back of the advent of the grip or suitcase, treat it shamefully. That's life for you.

In Texas the farmer is breeding buffaloes and crossing them with cattle. In Oregon they are raising Chinese pheasants, but the story of how the ostrich was first introduced to America is one that must be told.

In 1882 an unknown soldier of fortune filled the hold of a steamer bound for New York with more than 100 ostriches. Now, these gigantic birds weigh as much as 200 and 300 pounds, even more. They are accustomed to sunlight, the open range and, above all, fresh air. But here they were, packed in badly ventilated pens in the smelly hold of a tramp steamer. The pitching and tossing of the steamer also was responsible for the death of many of the birds. At any rate, but a mere handful of the original shipment arrived in New York. Later they were shipped to San Francisco, and still later to Anaheim, in Lower California.

Terrapin farming is one of the newer industries. Down on the Isle of Hope, Georgia, is one of the greatest of all terrapin farms. And the United States bureau of fisheries has been studying the diamond-back terrapin for the last eight years down at Beaufort, N. C. There terrapin have been in the pounds for more than six years, and the young have long ago reached the age where they can take care of themselves.

William Hagan has an immense fur plant down along the shores of the Delaware—he raises muskrats, and makes money at it. During the season of 1914-15 Mr. Hagan realized more than $2,000 clear profit on his immense farm, which extends over an acre of 614 acres. But muskrat farming is a very strenuous business. In the first place, the farmer must wait until fall before the real "farming" takes place. It is then that the skins are at their best. The animals are caught—the greater part of them—by means of stake traps; that is, traps attached to stakes. The stakes also serve as a guide. Then, too, the trappers take with them a needle-pointed rapier, used to spear any stray rat which may attempt to fleet at the first warning of danger to him or his. And those hip-booted trappers can spear a rat with all the deftness of a William Tell shooting an apple.

If you have never seen a muskrat farm, drop down to Mr. Hagan's place—you'll be surprised to see how an "underwater" farm is managed, and you'll hardly be able to believe there are so many muskrats in the world. Some days he averages more than 150, and he has come very near to the 200 mark. Yes, there's lots of money in muskrat farming; but unless you've got the constitution of an Alpine chasseur, don't attempt it.

Joseph Matlack of Moorestown, N. J., owns what is perhaps the largest guinea-pig farm in the world. This much is uncontradictable. He raises more of them than any grower in America, and makes money where others fail. Now, that's something to be proud of. Any man can be a farmer; but to be a successful farmer—well, that's something different. Of course, there are other guinea-pig farms which enrich their owners—lots and lots of them. But in the guinea-pig world Mr. Matlack is king.—Philadelphia North American.

Save Your Night Thoughts.

A memorandum book or tablet, which is at hand during the day for the reception of the ideas of literary people and other brilliant folk, is not generally available at the bedside, and many good thoughts are lost by the failure of the author to get out and make a note of it. An electrically-lighted memorandum pad is for this man. One end is supplied with a hood, under which is a tiny electric lamp and the battery to supply the current. Contact is made by pressing a slide at the end of the cylinder, and the hood shields the eyes from the light and throws the rays down upon the paper sheet.

Read Good Books.

Young women dependent upon their own efforts should give a thought to tomorrow as well as today. The girl alone hasn't anyone to look after her interests, so she must guard them herself. She should keep track of how she spends her salary, and should also join a good benevolent society, so that in the event of an illness or an accident she will be assured of proper medical treatment, and at the same time receive the benefit all such organizations provide.

Ferns That Grow Everywhere.

Two ferns are common throughout the world. One is the common brake found on the floors of all California canyons, known as pteridium aquilinum. The other is the polpod found on rocky canyon sides and known here as polypodium Californicum, and elsewhere, the world over as Polypodium vulgare. The specific differences are due entirely to geographic range.

But Don't Tear His Shirt.

The woman advanced ominously. "Are you the teacher that tore Henry's shirt?" "Yes." "What did you do it for?" "Because Henry was naughty and wouldn't behave. To make him listen to me I took him by the collar, and he broke away." The woman swung the ball bat toward the teacher. "Next time he don't behave," she said, "you hit him with this."—Newark News.